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## Deadline May 1 for Cultural and Aesthetics Project Advisory Committee

Applications for membership on the Cultural and Aesthetic Project Advisory Committee will be accepted through May 1. The Montana Arts Council makes half of the appointments to this committee, and the Montana Historical Society makes the other half.

The arts council looks for a broad range of professional arts expertise, and also geographic, racial and gender balance for the committee. Obligations of the four-year terms include attending a two-day panel meeting every other year and reviewing up to 100 grant applications online in preparation for that. The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 13-14, 2014 in Helena.

If you are interested in being considered, please send a letter of interest and a resume or bio electronically to Kristin Han Burgoyne at [kburgoyne@mt.gov](mailto:kburgoyne@mt.gov) by May 1.

## ARNI'S ADDENDUM

Arlynn Fishbaugh, Executive Director  
[afishbaugh@mt.gov](mailto:afishbaugh@mt.gov)



### Go Longhorns!

Randal Morger, executive director of Fort Benton's River and Plains Society, joins Arni Fishbaugh at the Montana Agriculture Museum during the Montana Performing Arts Consortium's annual conference, held in January. Randy and Arni are classmates from Fort Benton High School.

## Budget strife takes toll on MAC

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) has suffered through a 20% cut, totaling \$232,500, in federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) during the last three years. Here is a snapshot of our federal funding in recent years:

Fiscal Year 2011 \$884,000  
Fiscal Year 2012 \$814,500  
Fiscal Year 2013 \$769,300  
Fiscal Year 2014 \$721,000

During the last legislative session, the Legislature restored \$27,500 of this funding per year for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015. The arts council worked to be extremely prudent during the time period. We curtailed and delayed programs paid for by federal money so that we could use those savings to offset cuts in the coming year, which we have the budget authority to do. The watershed years are 2014 and 2015 when push comes to shove and we have to start making cuts instead of just spending what we have saved.

Readers will remember that the arts council has been in conversations with the Governor's Budget Office about whether there could be any additional funding to help to stave off these painful cuts. They originally thought there might be help, but we recently learned that this assistance was not going to be possible.

The council worked hard to avoid cutting core grant programs. However MAC looked to programs where money had not yet been applied for, or committed. As a result, the council did cut the short-term Artists in the Schools and Communities residency program by close to \$40,000. To date, \$107,000 in arts education grants were funded before this new cut took place.

In addition, the agency is putting its Governor's Arts Awards program in hiatus. It also was not able to fund the Humanities Montana Festival of the Book, and cuts were made to contracted positions. There was additional revenue that helped the bottom line from the agency's Leveraging Investments in Creativity private funding, which is a program that ended this last year.

### What's next?

The scenario for our Fiscal Year 2015, which runs July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015, is still uncertain, although we are heartened by the recent Congressional action that slightly increases the NEA's budget over this year's allocation. This is such a big improvement over the House version of the NEA's budget, which called for a 40% cut!

MAC is also thrilled about the grant review process for the three-year grant application we submitted this year and the high marks our application received. We think that will be helpful in terms of the two competitive areas of funding – arts education and “underserved.” At this point we don't know how all the numbers will shake out, but we are more optimistic than we would have been even a month ago.

Regardless of the outcome, it is doubtful, though, that the federal funding level will come anywhere close to where it was several years ago. Much more advocacy is needed federally and at the state level to secure investments in the arts economy at a meaningful level.

### Dealing with disappointment

Making decisions about cuts like this is so hard. Readers of this paper know the impact that government arts funding has in Montana.

I have spent many hours thinking about how people successfully cope with deep disappointment. How do people deal with and recover from the gut punches or maintain their bearings amidst relentless battles or rejection? This doesn't just have to do with budget cuts,

which on the face of it are nothing compared to coping with illness or death of a loved one. But there have been many people I've talked to during the last year who faced life- and career-changing experiences and who talked to me about how they've coped.

In Montana, I've frequently heard that we just “cowboy up.” Dust yourself off and get back to work. Of course, we all do this because we're Montanans and that's the way we do things here. But in the process, there are some things I've learned from others that have helped me when it seems like the horse just doesn't want to run anymore.

### Taking time to say this stinks!

Dealing with disappointment is like going through a grieving process. It is perfectly healthy and quite therapeutic to wallow in your misery for a bit and feel bad for awhile (without taking it out on someone else). Work to get all that bitterness out of your system.

We can't control everyone and everything. Many times, we have a sense of betrayal in thinking about what has happened. It's important to experience these things deeply in order to develop the coping mechanisms to get beyond them.

I'm reminded that one of the therapies used for people facing PTSD or other phobias is to have them confront their fears and relive their trauma so they can develop ways to inure themselves to the fear or the horror.

### High marks from the NEA

At the end of January, the Montana Arts Council's grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts was reviewed. This is a very important event for determining our federal funding level (we'll know the final amount later this spring). We were thrilled with the review our application received! Here, from the grant panel, are just a few of the comments we heard that made us so proud: “Everything they do is a model and inspiration. Amazing application! ... The “Public Value” Framework they use for their strategic plan is cohesive and well thought-out ... Fabulous application! Talk about getting engaged in the planning process! ... Great job in outreach, showing all the tools ... Four percent of the state's population participated in the planning process – WOW! An incredible application!”

### Scheduling time to recharge

We're all on a treadmill. We rarely take time to recharge our batteries because we're so busy doing the things that have to be done. (This is really true for farmers, ranchers and artists!) This is not an indulgence. It's really a necessity to remain sane and healthy.

If we don't renew our energy by taking some time off or doing things that give us pleasure and take us out of our everyday world, we will inevitably burn out. And no one is in control of how we spend our time but us. So it's our responsibility, no one else's, to schedule time to replenish our energy, our spirit and our mind.

For me, I've found that if I don't schedule it, it just won't happen. I've also realized that it is crucially important to schedule and plan things to look forward to, whether small or major. But if I'm facing a year and I don't have blocks of time planned out in advance to get me out of my regular world, it's not good.

### Delegate duties

There are times when one looks at what's ahead and becomes overwhelmed with the enormity of the work involved. I read an article this year about delineating what sucks the life out of you most, and seeing if there is another way to handle that aspect of your life.

This article suggested two things that resonated with me. The first is delegation ...

seeing if there were others that could help do the things that you have the most trouble doing, whether it's because you are sick and tired of doing it or because it isn't one of your strengths.

Now this can be a big problem for Montanans because, God forbid, if you can do something there is absolutely no reason why somebody else should do it! You're perfectly capable! (I'm originally a farm girl from Carter, so I feel this gives me license to say this.) That's just the way we are raised.

But just because you can do it doesn't mean you should do it. Oh yes, and let's not forget what happens frequently with this concept – that thing that you can do NEVER gets done because you're overcommitted, overextended, and exhausted!

### Breaking things into smaller pieces

The second tip is breaking things into smaller steps so that you're not looking at the giant picture, but developing short doable steps to getting it done. I know this has been an immensely helpful concept for me when I feel paralyzed by the enormity of some project and have no idea where to start. It also works when I have to do something I'm totally dreading or really hate.

### “If you can't change it, ignore it”

One of the best pieces of advice given to us at MAC was from the former lobbyist for the Montana Cultural Advocacy, Keith Colbo. Keith was also the director of many state agencies under several governors, so who better to provide this advice?

He said, “If you can't change it, ignore it.” For those of us with a tendency to obsess and fixate on how highly annoying a problem is, Keith's advice is just the ticket.

### Remember that things change

The final thing we all need to remember is that things change. Tomorrow the world will be different. A month from now, who knows what will have happened? Things get better. Tenacity and resilience are the keys to success, no matter what the field.

So with this in mind, it's time to get back on the saddle, “cowboy up” and start riding down the trail with you once again. With all best wishes for a spectacular 2014!

## STATE OF THE ARTS

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